

Message

From: POLITICO Pro Agriculture Whiteboard [politicoemail@politicopro.com]
Sent: 7/18/2019 8:27:50 PM
To: Dunn, Alexandra [dunn.alexandra@epa.gov]
Subject: EPA will not ban chlorpyrifos

By Liz Crampton

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The Environmental Protection Agency today announced that it will not ban use of chlorpyrifos, rejecting a request from environmental groups to prohibit use of the pesticide.

The action came in response to an appellate court decision earlier this year ordering the agency to respond to a petition from environmental groups that sought to ban the widely used pesticide. Research has shown that chlorpyrifos, which is commonly applied on fruit and vegetable crops, has the potential to damage brain development in children. Today was the final day EPA could respond under the court's timeline.

In a notice that will be posted to the Federal Register, the agency said "there is good reason" to continue allowing farmers to use chlorpyrifos, "given the importance of this matter and the fact that critical questions remained regarding the significance of the data addressing neurodevelopmental effects."

The EPA under the Obama administration was taking steps to ban the pesticide in 2015. But in March 2017 President Donald Trump's first EPA administrator, Scott Pruitt, denied a petition that sought to prohibit chlorpyrifos. It was an early move intended to further Trump's deregulatory agenda.

Pruitt declared EPA needed to "provide regulatory certainty to the thousands of American farms that rely on chlorpyrifos" and said the agency would conduct more research before determining whether the pesticide should be removed from the market.

Environmentalists then sued the agency. In April, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ordered EPA to act within three months on the petition to ban chlorpyrifos, which was developed by Corteva.

The debate over chlorpyrifos has divided green groups and the agriculture industry. Environmentalists, citing research linking pesticide exposure to neurological damage, have pushed for decades for the government to prohibit chlorpyrifos. But the farm lobby argues the pesticide is an important crop protection tool and have resisted efforts to ban its use.

The environmental groups behind the lawsuit blasted the agency's decision.

"By allowing chlorpyrifos to stay in our fruits and vegetables, Trump's EPA is breaking the law and neglecting the overwhelming scientific evidence that this pesticide harms children's brains," said Patti Goldman, an attorney for Earthjustice.

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